What's Happening In And About The
Yankee
Air Force
Museum
Hangar Happenin's

Nov
1999

YANKEE
AIR
FORCE

Yankee Air Museum P.O. Box 590 Belleville, MI 48112 Tel. (734) 483 - 4030

Hangar Happenin's
is a monthly newsletter
for the Yankee Air Force

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Board Members:

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Erwin Stirnweis	Paul Chu Lin
George Whitfield	George Davis
Clayton Jones	J.D. Hill
Ray Jackson	Vic Bonfiglio
Ray Hunter	

Meeting Schedule
1st Wednesday of Month - 7:30 PM
General Membership

3rd Wednesday of Month - 7:30 PM
Board Meeting
Public Welcome

2nd Wednesday even-numbered months
7:30 PM in the "Doghouse"
Flyable Aircraft Meeting
Everyone Welcome

MUSEUM HOURS
10 - 4 TUESDAY-SATURDAY
12 - 4 SUNDAY
Closed Mondays and Holidays

From the Editors' Desk:

Another month already...time flies when you're having fun! We hope you have taken advantage of your chance to order something from the Gift Shop. Our first try at doing something in color didn't quite turn out like we would have liked but we're still learning. Speaking of that, in last month's issue we talked about two of the Publications Department staff and our website. The two budding geniuses have finished and posted to the site their first page. The static display page has been re-done and looks good. The two are now going to go through each of the pages and make any corrections and changes where necessary. They are also going to put the site on an extra computer that is available and set it up at the tour desk area so our visitors can see what the **yankeeairmuseum.org** website looks like.

As this is written we have just had our Founders Day festivities. The one thing about this celebration of our birthday is that members have a chance to find out what is happening in and around the organization, and to renew old friendships and make new ones. The annual meeting was once again not very well attended, but for those who did attend the word seemed to be that with all of the problems we encountered this year the future seems bright. For those of you who have not had the time or inclination to attend one of these, may we suggest it is a good way to recharge your batteries. For those of us dealing with the day-to-day operations, it is easy to lose sight of the really neat and special things that are going on. Each of the department heads reported on what had happened in their respective departments this past year and some of the things are nothing short of amazing. There are some real special people in this organization. So the next time you think all is lost, come down to an annual meeting and find out what really is going on. Our open house left much to be desired. Anyone who has been to these knows that if the weather is really nice, our open house usually isn't. Well, guess what? Perfect weather, for doing almost anything other than coming out to see what is going on with the Yankee Air Museum. I guess it means that next year everyone has to do the cold-rainy-windy-crummy dance and then we will be swamped with people complaining how cold it is and "Why aren't the airplanes flying?" and "Why can't I get a ride?!" All in all, though, at least from our viewpoint things went pretty well in spite of everything. It never ceases to amaze us that it all seems to work. We hope you enjoy this issue and a reminder: order something from our catalog from last month and help your organization keep flying our colors. **—The *HH* Staff**

Our internet address is:
http://www.yankeeairmuseum.org
Our e-mail address is:
yankeeairmuseum@provide.net

Hangar Happenin's e-mail address is:
seaton@provide.net

We heard you were missing these,
so here's a brand-new

BARRY'S BRAIN BUSTER !

How did
Pratt & Whitney
come to be?

The answer is hidden somewhere nearby.

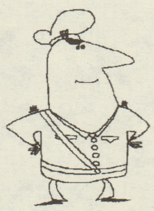
Visitors to the Museum

For July, August & September we had 1880 walk-ins and 744 in tour groups (Total: 2624) Canada, England, Norway, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, and Slovakia were countries represented.

Past Dates of Interest

3 Nov 1943	500 US 8th AF aircraft raid Wilhelmshafen harbor in Germany
7 Nov 1907	Signal Corps allotted $25,000 to procure an airplane
7 Nov 1944	FDR re-elected to 4th term as US President
8 Nov 1950	1st jet combat: F-80 downs MiG-15 in Korea
11 Nov 1919	President Wilson proclaims Armistice Day
11 Nov 1954	Armistice Day renamed Veterans Day
11 Nov 1956	1st flight of B-58 *Hustler* supersonic bomber
14 Nov 1966	C-141 *Starlifter* 1st jet to land in Antarctica
20 Nov 1942	Opening of the Alaska Highway
22 Nov 1963	JFK assassinated
22 Nov 1988	B-2 Stealth Bomber unveiled by USAF
24 Nov 1944	*Dauntless Dotty* piloted by Rosie O'Donnell & Robert Morgan led B-29 formation attack on Tokyo, Japan
25 Nov 1940	1st flight of B-26 *Marauder*

Winner of the October meeting
50/50 drawing was
FRANK NAGY
donating his prize to the Stinson !



From the Head - Office, That Is !

by Bill Hanney, President

No more jokes! My comments about wintering the planes (and myself) in Florida were made in jest, but I certainly heard about it! Enough, already, PLEASE!

Now to the serious stuff.

You probably saw the editorial in which it was pointed out that a member made derogatory remarks about another member's ethnicity. That type of comment has no place in this organization. I would hope that we are better than that. I can't and won't dictate your thoughts, but your words could be grounds for a complaint before the Membership Committee. Let's be adult and hold your tongue. You can dump on a person because of their work habits, cleanliness or attitude but not their color, religion or sexual orientation.

You have probably heard enough about the lawsuits, but I've got to say a bit more. Several members have called or contacted me in regard to a letter they received from the "Ad Hoc Membership Group" generally referring to them as not having the nerve to sign their names and making scatological comments to the disposal of such a letter. Some have asked me for the names of that group as they wished to confront them. I will not release the names as they have a right to disagree and even sue the organization. No officer or board member may take any punitive action against them. Some of those listed in the lawsuit deny emphatically having lent their name to such an effort and could be unfairly blamed for the actions of a few. A copy of the letter has been forwarded to our corporate counsel to provide the basis for a countersuit. I'm certain that the notice of such an action, which could cost each of them considerable legal fees, will get some reaction. A written denial of complicity in such an action would, of course, release them from such a lawsuit.

As they used to say on the radio, "Keep those cards and letters coming in!"

— Bill Hanney

Connie's Corner

"From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli"

November 10, 1999, will be the 224th anniversary of the establishment of the United States Marine Corps. This past September 1999, Mrs. Donna Meffer called Yankee Air Force Museum, wishing to donate the uniform of her husband, a PFC in the U.S. Marine Corps. Joe Kosek, representing YAF, picked up the uniform. It was a heartrending experience for her to give up her deceased husband's Marine uniform, but she wanted him to become a part of Yankee Air Museum. The wonderful gesture led me to relive the great history of the United States Marine Corps.

Marine troops, usually having ranks comparable to those in the Army, serve on board ships of war or in conjunction with naval operations.

In 1775, the Continental Congress established the Continental Marines in the American Revolution. In 1798 came its successor, the present U.S. Marine Corps.

April 27, 1805, in the Tripoli-US War, a squad of U.S. Marines and 100 Arab mercenaries marched 500 miles from Egypt to Derna and were assisted by U. S. Navy vessels, approved by Thomas Jefferson.

The phrase, "...to the shores of Tripoli" in the official song of the United States Marine Corps, refers to the Derna campaign where for the first time the U.S. Flag was raised over an Old World fort.

Ironically, during WW II, December 13, 1943, the forces of Rommel the Desert Fox were expected to make a last stand before Tripoli. The 8th Army attacked and occupied Rommel's main defense with a victorious drive to Tripoli. The British entered Tripoli on January 23, 1943.

In 1945, on February 23, who could forget the now famous photo taken by Joe Rosenthal of the raising of the U.S. Flag, held by Lt. Harold C. Shrier, on Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi. Iwo fell to the 28th Regiment, 5th Division of the United States Marine Corps, after 36 days of bitter, bloody fighting where more than 4,000 U.S. Marines were killed and 15,000 wounded.

In April of 1945, the members of the Women's Reserve of the Marine Corps performed highly useful services in the combat zones of the Pacific, just as did their prototypes in the WAVES and WACS. In the conflicts to follow, the U.S. Marines were always ready.

"What so proudly we hail..." the United States Marine Corps.

HALLS AIR SHOW

Halls, Tennessee
28-29 August 1999

I have been to maybe 40 airshows over the last 4 years with our B-17. Some have been good and some have been very good, but this one was such a great show that I feel compelled to write about it.

It's held every year at the old Dyersburg Air Base at Halls, Tennessee, that was a B-17 training field during World War II. The main "mover & shaker" of this show is a lady by the name of Pat Higdon. She does a great job of booking in all the aircraft. I'm sure she is working on Airshow 2000 already. Everyone down there knows what to do and when to do it, from fast action on the fuel and oil truck, to the water wagon that comes around every 30 minutes, to the ramp crew in keeping the aircraft moving and out at a safe pace.

I also must say the people are very friendly, like the couple who had a large motor home parked behind us and fed us roast beef sandwiches and soft drinks all day, and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Cherry who treated us to dinner Friday night at the local country club in Dyersburg. We also had the Mayor of Halls take some of our people into town on Saturday and open up City Hall to show us a very large mural of B-17s and World War II.

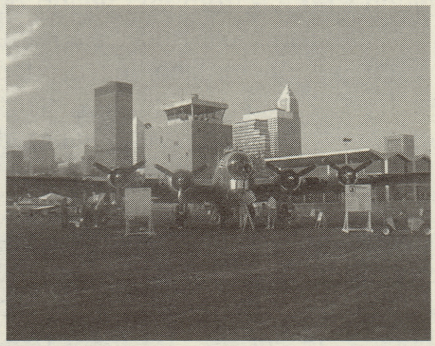
Last but not least, I must mention the great outdoor barbecue that they provided to the airshow participants on Saturday night. I predict this show will continue to grow each year. Looking forward to going back next year. I have always heard about Southern Hospitality, and now I know it's true!

Norm Ellickson, Crew Chief
YAF B-17 *Yankee Lady*

The Cleveland Air Show

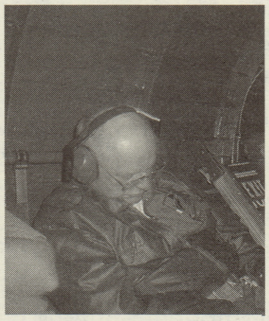
by Matt Hurd
(aka The Mannequin)

After being notified by Dan Tomzack regarding the Cleveland Air Show, the usual excitement set in. Soon it was Friday. Wheels up and we were off! Shortly after takeoff I made my way to the bombardier seat. Sitting there in the nose, I wondered what it would have been like in WW II. Soon dry land slipped away beneath us and we were over the English Channel. We climbed higher and had to go on oxygen. I knew that soon the coast would appear on the horizon. We passed over a freighter. I bid him "Good Luck" as he steamed away. Check equipment – all OK. Then out on the horizon the shoreline appeared. We descended and banked to the right. What's this? A stadium? Oh yes, it's Cleveland! We dropped down, made a left bank, and did our arrival show pass to show the "*Blue Angels*" how it's done, and then landed.


The *"Lady"* and the Cleveland skyline

Quest, our sponsor, was waiting and gave us a warm welcome. After giving our VIPs a ride, they were very impressed with our "*Lady*" and invited us again for next year. They were all very nice people and extended their hospitality all weekend. We then wrapped the plane up and went to the hotel. Before dinner we all met in the lounge for our traditional air show drinks. As usual, I got a few funny looks when I ordered mine. Oh well! We ate, then hit the sack. Charlie Jackson bunked with me to keep me in line or maybe I was supposed to keep him in line; either way we were both "out of line" - ha-ha.

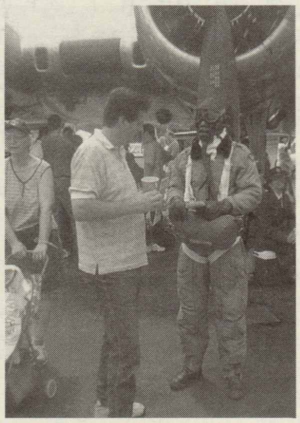
"Hey Norm, you got the map? Which way to wherever we're going!"


Sleeping Beauty?

Day one – and what a day! Gates opened at nine with a steady flow of people throughout the whole day. The *Yankee Lady* was an impressive sight with several WW II re-enactors adding to the show. Tours were steady with Charlie Jackson at the front door, Dale Worchester at the back, Dick Bodycombe, Paul Scholl, and Bill Wier taking turns in the cockpit. Todd Hackbarth hammered out dog tags, I relieved Todd, Bette Watson took orders, Karen and Norm Ellickson held down the retail, and we all switched off from time to time.

Having brought my WW II flight gear I decided to join the re-enactors with my high altitude gear, complete with oxygen mask. I grabbed some brochures and leaned against the propeller on #3 and stood completely still – "the mannequin". Charlie dubbed me "The Dummy" which I took as a compliment. I must have been a pretty good dummy because I fooled some of the people. At the end of the day we were all ready for the lounge. Todd's arm looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger's, tours went great, retail was a little slow due to about 25 other vendors along the 6000-ft. midway. Saturday night was "free drinks and food" at a place called "*Shooters*" in the Flats (downtown Cleveland). With Todd chauffeuring, we set out for dinner. The Flats were packed—no parking anywhere. Did I mention that there were no parking spaces ANYWHERE?!!! So we checked a couple more options and went back to the hotel for dinner. Night's end.

Sunday – another great day. We all manned our battle stations and waited for the crowd. This was the busiest tour day of the show. And, boy, does Cleveland like those dog tags—we ran out! Norm called the hangar and JD Hill and Keith Jones boxed up tags and brochures and ran to Metro Airport. I missed Sunday night dinner with the crew as I was with family but I heard that there were some funny stories told by Dick and Paul about the "link trainer."


Matt "Mannequin" Hurd

Monday morning came and "WA-LA"! Dog tags and brochures – We are back in business! A big "THANKS" for the maximum effort! We weren't sure how the crowd would be on Monday, but it was steady — another good day! We all worked hard, had a great time, and some good laughs. By the way, how heavy is that electric dog tag machine? We packed up, waited a little while on the weather and then headed for home. The sunset was beautiful as we crossed the Great Lake! Upon our arrival our faithful ground crew greeted us and we were home again.

Some Homework from your Education Committee !

This summer I applied to **LA-Z-BOY**, the furniture company, for support of YAF's Education Program. Within a very short time, they replied and said they would like to send us a donation, which they did. I want to thank them for their generous contribution and to ask our members to visit the **LA-Z-BOY** stores when in need of furniture and accessories.

Bette Watson
Education Chair

CROWD CONTROL and RAMP SAFETY

by George Binson
#2177 WR

I recently attended the local airshow featuring the *Blue Angels* and other aerobatic performers at the Donaldson Center in Greenville, South Carolina. The weather was hot, and the attendance was 55,000. I settled in for what I thought would be an outstanding afternoon of aerial entertainment. Other circumstances would change all that.

What totally captured my attention was the fact that there was practically no authoritative control over where the spectators were allowed to roam, or what they were allowed to do! By that I mean that spectators were walking over, around, and through roped-off areas of the Flight Line and Ramp where they pawed at planes and fabric, turned props and generally paid little rspect for the personal property of others. Perhaps worse was the fact that many were walking amongst the planes smoking cigars, pipes and cigarettes! They were totally ignorant to the potential hazard of overhead fuel tanks with expanding av-gas and fumes.

I was concerned. I walked up to a very official-looking man at the airshow who had the logo of the company that coordinated this event, and advised him of the situation. I further explained that the FAA has very specific rules concerning safety at airshows and that I didn't see how this situation could be tolerated.

The circumstances at the recent airshow only needed one little flame to cause an explosion that could have easily killed and maimed hundreds of people. I'm very thankful that this did not happen and sincerely hope that our group understands the responsibility that comes with any organized event involving aircraft.

A Trip to an Aircraft Graveyard

by George Davis #5572WR
and Larry Blascyk #3948WR

George and I started out on a parts salvage trip on September 1, 1999, to Atco, New Jersey, to purchase some parts for the RB-57A. I had been in contact with the owner for about 3 years about a cockpit section he had of a 57A model Canberra. After many one-way phone calls (he would never call back even tho he did admit to having a 57 cockpit). He would never give me a price over the phone for the parts; he said I would have to come there and show him what I wanted and we would go from there.

So I explained this all to Dick Rice and said I would like to go. He said to give it a try. We mapped out our trip, loaded up the car and headed out. It was great weather for driving, and little traffic. It took us about 12 hours to cover the 600 and some odd miles, with stops for fuel for the car and ourselves. We arrived in Atco about 7 PM, found the yard, then got a motel for the night. We headed over to the yard about 8:30 the next morning, only to find the owner not there. He was in Atlantic City for a meeting. His mother got word to him that we were there and he said to look around and he would be back around 1 PM.

The place was unbelievable! There were aircraft stacked 30 feet high (we have pictures). There were F-84s, F-100s, F-4s, F-18s, jet engines stacked like cord wood, Cessna hulks, helicopter bodies, and oh yes, an F-86 intake sticking out of the pile. There were multi-engine aircraft cut up and stacked on top of old school busses. There was even what looked to us to be the front of a C-119.

We wandered further out into the woods and found old cars and trucks dating back to the late 30s rusting into the ground.

About 1:30 the owner showed up. We went back to the 57 and showed him what we wanted. He explained to us first that all museums think he is in business to donate or sell cheap aircraft parts to them. He said he was in business to make money, so we could have the 10 pieces we wanted for $1,000 or the one part for $300. The reason for the high price was the fact that there were no other parts left out there, and he had them all. I just thought of all the cars rusting into the ground, and the big rush to buy his stuff, said "No, thank you," turned and left. So went three years of trying to get a part from this person. So, if you're thinking of going shopping there, bring your checkbook.

We turned our car back northwest and headed home. Do not try to get from Camden, New Jersey to north of Philly in the afternoon—can you say **gridlock**! We drove through Ohio and stopped for the night. The next day we thought we would try to find another aircraft (junk yard, as the locals call it) museum as listed in the "Guide to Over 800 Aircraft Museums," on our way to Cleveland. We got no answer on the phone call, some vague directions from locals, and one guy who said everyone was told not to tell where this place was by the owner. So we were back on our way once more. We were 0 for 2 for the trip but had better luck near Toledo; we only got stuck in the jam-up as a result of the 64-car pile-up due to fog. They were still pulling damaged cars at 11 o'clock. We were stuck about a half an hour. There were no roads from here to New Jersey and back that were not without construction. George Davis and I have photos of the yard if anyone would like to see them.

BARRY'S BRAINBUSTER ANSWER

In 1863 they both worked for Colt Firearms. They left there and formed their company Pratt & Whitney, to manufacture firearms.

REMEMBERING MY BIT OF W W II

by Alex Azary
1790 WR

I have wanted to fly ever since the day in 1927 when we saw Charles Lindbergh and the *Spirit of St. Louis* fly over our house on his way back to St. Louis after his historic flight across the Atlantic Ocean. I was seven at the time. In 1941 I signed up in the Civilian Pilot Training Program, which was training pilots outside the military prior to WW II. Job considerations forced me to drop out after 35 hours of flying time. I was working at Aeroproducts Division of General Motors in Dayton, Ohio, as an engineering draftsman. With both of my brothers already in the service, I decided it was time for me to get into active service. I enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a pre-aviation cadet. Due to a surplus of trainees, the cadet corps was being cut back, and I was able to transfer to flight radio school. After I graduated as a Flight Radio Operator, I stayed on as a radio instructor for about six months before requesting combat duty.

I was trained in aerial gunnery in B-17 bombers at Yuma, Arizona, and was then transferred to combat training in B-24 bombers as a Flight Radio Operator-Gunner, at Casper, Wyoming. On completion of training, our crew of nine was assigned a new B-24 delivered from the Ford Motor Company's Willow Run Bomber Plant. We flew the plane overseas via the North Atlantic route to Europe landing at: Bangor, Maine; Goode Bay, Labrador; Keflavik, Iceland; Valley, Wales; Marrakech, Morocco; Tunis, Tunisia; and finally landing at Gioia, Italy, where we left the plane.

We were then transferred to our own assigned air base at Cerignola, which is located on the east side of Italy across from Naples. We were part of the 765th Bomb Squadron, 461st Bomb Group-Heavy, 15th Air Force, Toretta Air Base. We were assigned quarters, with the officers occupying one so-called ten-man tent, and the enlisted men another ten-man tent. Our crew consisted of officers (Pilot, Co-Pilot, Navigator, Bombardier) and enlisted (Flight Engineer, Radio Operator, Armorer-Gunner, Nose Turret-Gunner, Ball Turret-Gunner, and Tail Turret-Gunner).

Our living conditions were not the greatest and the crews used Yankee ingenuity to improve on whatever was available. Each day, trucks drove into Cerignola to the town square in front of the cathedral, loaded up with those Italians who had been cleared by Security and had the proper I.D. cards, and brought them back to the various squadron areas to work in places such as the mess halls, laundries, shops, headquarters, buildings, etc. Crews before us had paid the Italians in cigarettes to build walls of the locally available "tufa stone," around the outside of the tents, to keep out the wind, cold, raid, and rats. They also made a desk and a table from salvaged wood packing cases. A stove was made by cutting a hole near the bottom of an empty 55-gallon oil drum. A V-shaped trough made of aluminum from a crashed B-24 was placed inside, supported on bricks. A length of pipe, with a series of small holes drilled along its length, was suspended above the trough. This was then connected to a line leading to a storage tank outside of the tent. The fuel used to heat the "stove" was 100-octane aircraft fuel! On my first attempt to light the stove, I opened the valve a bit too much, and when I bent down to insert a lighted piece of paper into the hole, it blew back and burned off my mustache and eyebrows! It only happened once. I learn fast!

The food was tolerable, because we had some good cooks with imagination who enjoyed trying to do something different with powdered eggs, powdered milk, powdered potatoes, Spam and canned foods. In Italy we were cautioned not to consume anything that wasn't baked, cooked, distilled, or fermented. They had diseases and bacteria we didn't have a cure for!

Our unit flew bombing missions to Austria, Hungary, Germany, Romania and northern Italy. We received heavy anti-aircraft fire to and from the targets, and our crew was lucky—we never got a scratch! We were replacements for crews that didn't make it back. We were told that we had a 30% chance of finishing our tours alive.

After the war in Europe we flew a B-24 back to the U.S.A. from Italy by way of the southern Atlantic route. On our way to Marrakech, we had an engine failure and flew four hours on three engines which, incidentally, was not unheard of. Under military conditions, equipment is usually pushed to the limit and failures do occur. While we waited for the mechanics to repair the engine, we visited the town. It was quite an experience, especially the "Casbah!" It is the native quarter, dark dirty, and no place to get lost. We went in groups and carried our sidearms. I managed to buy some beautiful cameos, silver-mounted ivory bracelets, and briar blocks to carve pipes. (Unfortunately these were stolen after I returned to the States.)

We finally took off and headed southwest over the desolate Atlas Mountains to Dakar, Senegal. Then came the wild flight across the South Atlantic. We flew through several thunderstorms of hurricane intensity, where our plane dropped 10,000 feet in a downdraft, even though we were trying to climb with full power! We finally landed at Natal, Brazil. I had my hands full trying to maintain radio communications through the storms. We spent a day resting and checking the plane for damage. We found none and were able to take off on our next leg home.

Our next stop to refuel was British Guyana, flying over dense green jungles. This area was known as the "Green Hell." We were told at briefing that if we crashed, we could never be found! At the base we were cautioned not to venture into the jungle out of sight of the base buildings, because the jungle was so dense that we would be hopelessly lost in just a hundred yards from the cleared area. We saw some giant ants going in a straight line over obstacles that would stop any other creature. The humidity was unbelievable, and it rained every day at three o'clock. The downpour was so great that we had to circle the field for fifteen minutes on our approach because we couldn't see anything below us.

The next day we flew to Puerto Rico to rest and refuel. The last leg of our odyssey brought us to Savannah, Georgia, where we parted company with our trusted war-weary friend "*Rhode Island Red II*." (*Rhode Island Red I* was shot down by anti-aircraft fire over Austria.) A feisty Rhode Island Red rooster was portrayed on the nose of the ship.

We all separated to go to our homes for a thirty-day furlough. We were then reassigned to B-29 squadrons to train and go to the Pacific area to fight the Japanese, but the war ended before we were able to complete training. Several of the crew stayed in the service for a time, but I opted to take my discharge after being awarded the Air Medal along with the rest of the crew.

In 1986, six of our crew of nine got together again, for the first time since the war, at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. The other three fellows had died since we were together. We have stayed in touch ever since and have gotten together several times.

A footnote to the above saga —

In 1985, members of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups, which were based at Toretta Air Base, returned on a tour to Italy, and Cerignola, to visit the various sites where we had endured our tour of duty. The olive groves, the centuries-old buildings, the friendly people hadn't changed. The metal panels that formed the runways were gone, but not forgotten; the enterprising natives now used them for fencing.

Prior to the visit, the Groups had planned to erect a bronze plaque in the town square, listing the names of our fallen comrades. Meeting with the professor of the local technical school, they heard him tell of the many bright students who could not afford to go on to higher education. It was decided to honor our comrades in a better way by setting up a memorial scholarship fund for deserving scholars. The professor would select the honorees. To date, four scholarships have been awarded each year. Our crew navigator, Chris Donaldson, was the scholarship co-chairman. In 1989, our wives and I accompanied Chris to Italy to tour the country, and attend the scholarship presentations in Cerignola. One of the winners was a young lady whose proud father was present. He donated the monetary value to the local orphanage, saying that they didn't need the money; the honor was enough! He proudly showed us his I.D. card from 1944, which he still carried, when he was all of twelve years old. He used to shine our shoes!

WANTED

Secretary for President and Vice-President knowledgeable with standard secretarial duties, typing, filing, etc.

Tuesdays & Thursdays
10 AM—4 PM

OTTAWA COUNTY EXECUTIVE AIRPORT ZEELAND, MICHIGAN

Saturday, September 11, 1999

As the *Hangar Happenin's* "preafrooder," I really thought twice about going on this trip. It was deadline day for the October issue. We were finishing the last two articles and if I didn't proofread them, the words would surely mutate in the printer's hands.

But it was one of those rare days so perfect that you know you may never have such good luck or weather again!

Wheels up at 0800, our B-17 *Yankee Lady* left Willow Run flying west by northwest toward Lake Michigan, with a crew of nine Yanks and a Dog Tag Lady. Our mission for the day would be our second (and maybe annual?) appearance at the Ottawa County Executive Airport near Zeeland, Michigan.

As much as I liked the security of the radio room for take-off and landing, it was great to be able to move about in flight. Most of our crew wanted to venture into the glass nose. I'd "been there, done that" (with the trepidation of a cat on a glass-top table)! So I skirted around the ball-turret area, and standing at the portside waist-gunner's window, I saw the first signs of autumn, brush strokes of red in the treetops far below. Frank Sukel taught me how to take aim through the gunsite, and I practiced on an enemy cloud that flew by.

Too soon, I felt the beginnings of a descent. "Fast trip!" I thought, got back to my radio room seat and buckled myself in. I was especially proud that I remembered how to secure my own shoulder harness since my last B-17 trip in 1997.

Those treetops got closer, until I could see two FedEx planes at the airport below. "Big place!" I thought. When we were close enough to land … we didn't! If I'd had a headset on, I'd have known we were doing a fly-by for the Grand Rapids tower!

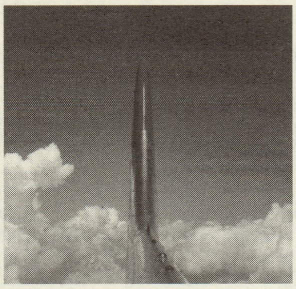
Zeeland was just minutes ahead. Our hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Chet Uncapher, were waiting for us at the Ottawa County Executive Airport, along with everyone in their neighborhood. As we landed, we saw a taxiway lined with amazing "hangar homes." As soon as *Yankee Lady* came to a stop, we found ourselves in the middle of a unique block party! Families literally walked across the street to meet us. One little girl, driving her battery-powered "Barbie Jeep," visited with me frequently during the afternoon, looking over the situation, watching me make dog tags, and finally asked me which one of the crew was my dad?

In planning this event, it seemed everything you could possibly need in the course of a day was doubled: breakfast and lunch, a great sound system and a funny announcer, at least one trash can for every two people in attendance, and a tractor-trolley with seating for ten, shuttling folks around the field all day—just hop on!

Young Eagle Flights sponsored by EAA Chapter members were given throughout the day. Certificates pre-signed by Chuck Yeager were presented on the spot with the *Young Eagle's* name and their pilot's name proudly and professionally imprinted.

This friendly feeling made me realize there was a lesson here: to hold a successful event, imagine you're entertaining neighborhood guests. If I ever publish my dream magazine, *Home & Hangar*, these wonderful people will receive charter subscriptions!

The late afternoon sky was so beautiful, it was decided we'd fly back to Willow Run "with the top down!" We stored the radio room roof hatch and one of our crew waved to the crowd on departure. After we were airborne and performed what felt to me like a fantastic fly-by, some of us popped our heads up through the open hatch to enjoy an indescribably unusual sight, first revealed to us during a flight to *Sporty's Pilot Shop* in Batavia, Ohio. Todd Hackbarth captured it on film that day and we'll try to re-print it here for you. The perfect ending to a perfect day.



— Mary Ann Bittner
#3429 WR

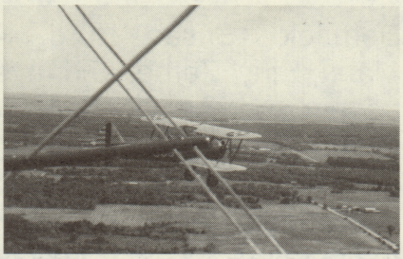
Editor's Note:
We'd like to show you some of the Zeeland hangar homes, but to protect the privacy of the owners, we will not publish those photos here. You wouldn't believe your eyes anyway!

THE AWARD- WINNING MICHIGAN STEARMANS

Steal the Show at the Annual Stearman Fly-In Galesburg, Illinois

At our last Galesburg meeting, the first week in September, which my wife refers to as our "Annual Return to Mecca," the Michigan Stearmans did themselves proud! There was a Michigan Stearman flying, winning, and taking home at least one award in each category.

The winning formation had Bill McHenry flying slot. The second place formation was, of course, all-Michigan with Roger Brown flying lead, Ed Dudgeon left wing, Roger Simpson right wing, and Bob Pingston in the slot. The third place team had Pete Chestnut in lead position. Jim Bricken won the bomb drop with a bull's eye (very unusual)! Dan O'Connor took third place in spot landing; and in short-field take-off, Bob Pingston did second with Bill Rodgers taking a first. The aerobatic contest had Tim Liewer in second place. Nine Michigan Stearmans took home a total of eleven trophies. Not bad for a bunch of loud, fun-loving Stearman drivers who really come to the fly-in for the great fellowship involved, and to see old friends and generally have a ball.



Look out, guys, because next year more Michigan people and more airplanes will be there! We have two-and-a-half new airplanes in the barn right now. If Michigan never takes another trophy for flying, a couple of these new aircraft may take Best of Show.

We are aware of all of the hard work, blood, sweat and tears that go into putting this fly-in together. We Michigan Stearman bums would like to thank all who are responsible for this great event.

Thank you so much and God Bless.

Bill Rodgers
#0114 WR

NATIONAL WARPLANE MUSEUM'S AIRSHOW *"WINGS OF EAGLES"*

Elmira, New York

On Friday, September 17, 1999, the B-17 (after a short delay) left for Elmira, New York with a crew of ten. This was the weekend after Hurricane Floyd came up the east coast. Many planes were not able to come in because of rain and flooding.

After landing, we were greeted warmly by Skip Lehman and family (Kim and Laurel). It was great to see them again after a long year.

There were three B-17s at the show: National Warplane's *Fuddy Duddy,* Dave Tallichet's, and ours, *Yankee Lady.*

Friday and Saturday nights, the

museum had a buffet dinner for their guests in their hangar. It gives everyone a chance to see each other and exchange stories. A sidebar to this story: when we arrived, we were given packets which included dinner tickets. I handed them out to everyone and said, "Don't lose them." Guess who couldn't find her ticket Saturday night?

Yankee Lady flew in the show both days with the other B-17s and the B-25s (three of them), one of them from our friends at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum. In the same group flying together were a couple of P-51s and a P-40. The pyrotechnics used were spectacular!

During the weekend, we did tours and set up our store under the wing of the airplane. Our Northeast Division set up their store on the opposite side of our store.

Over the weekend we had a chance to visit National Warplane's Museum and gift shop with which they have done a great job.

For me and some other members going to the *"Wings of Eagles"* airshow each year, it means renewing old friendships started many years ago, and the feeling goes both ways.

We arrived home Sunday night around 7:30 PM. This was another great weekend!

'Til next time,
Super Cub
Bette Watson

YAF's Last Fly-In of the 1990s

The last airshow that the Yankee Air Force will attend in the 1990s was held at Delaware, Ohio on the weekend of October 2-3, 1999. The B-17, with Dick Bodycombe, Duane Nelson and Norm Ellickson as flight crew, departed Willow Run Friday morning. The air crew consisted of Clayton Jones, Clay Jones, Karen Ellickson, Greg Gorecki, Bob Richards, Ken Young, and Dave Lowry. The flight down was smooth and uneventful. Upon arrival, we discovered that the runway has been lengthened from 3500 feet last year to 5000 feet this year. Shortly after arrival, a press flight was given. We made the evening news. That was about all that was done Friday. Checked into the same motel that we stayed at last year, and then went to dinner.

Saturday morning around 9:00 the C-47 departed Willow Run with Dick Zerbe and Randy Hotton at the controls and Matt Hurd as flight engineer. Also on board were Henry and Joyce Bornhold, Susan Hurd, Jeff Mann, Ethyl Zerbe, and myself as aircrew. As we flew over Ohio, Susan spotted her grandmother's farm. The day was bright and sunny, the temperature was pleasantly warm and the flight was nice and smooth.

Upon arrival, we discovered the ramp had an interesting mix of aircraft. Besides our two aircraft, there was a TBM belonging to Steve and Phyllis Hay, a pair of AT-6s, four Stearmans (PT-17), a pair of YAK-52s, a P-51 Mustang (*Hurry Home Honey* out of Louisville), a pair of Huey helicopters, and two J-3 Cubs. These were all display aircraft. In addition, there were the usual assortment of taildraggers that you would find at an uncontrolled field that is having a fly-in. In the hangar that had the pancake breakfast was a pre-W.W.II Mercedes that is undergoing restoration. One of the Hueys belonged to the Ohio National Guard. The other belonged to the Norwalk Aviation Museum, and they kept busy both Saturday and Sunday flying rides. One unusual thing that was on the ramp was a white Lincoln Town Car Limo. I finally asked someone who the limo was for. I was informed that the limo was the transportation for **us** and the Steve Hay group out of Goshen, Indiana! Sure enough, when some of us from the C-47 wanted to go over to the motel to check in, we piled in and the driver took us to the motel. On the way back, Dick and Ethyl wanted to stop at Bob Evan's since they did not have breakfast. The driver dropped them off and came back and got them when they were finished. I could get used to that in a big hurry.

Saturday saw a steady crowd and there were always people buying things at the retail tables and touring the aircraft. Saturday afternoon the B-17 did a VIP flight and a flight experience ride. After the show closed, we phoned the *Brown Jug*, a highly recommended local restaurant, said that we had twenty-five people and asked if they could accommodate us. They said no problem, come on down! And so the limo driver started shuttling us down to the *Brown Jug*. One portion of the restaurant was made up of tables for groups of eight or more, so a big group was not the problem that it might have been. The beer was cold, the food was great and the service was excellent. And individual checks were no trouble! If you're ever in Delaware and looking for a good meal, I would definitely recommend the *Brown Jug.*

Sunday morning dawned overcast and cold. Things were very slow at the airport until noon or so. By noon the crowd started to arrive and the temperature started to warm up. The B-17 did three more flight experience rides and a VIP hop. There was a NOTAM published saying that the airport was to be closed from 1345 to 1415 for a fly-by of F-16s out of Toledo. The time came and went with no fly-by. Seems that Toledo was weathered in. The airport manager wanted to know if we could take up some of his young volunteers in the C-47. A deal was struck, all the seatbelts were installed and the airplane was filled with all the workers who normally are not rewarded, and off they went. There were twenty smiling faces when they got back. We fueled the C-47 and packed it up and were out of there around five o'clock. The B-17 was still giving its second last flight experience at this time. So the 47 got home and was in the barn for an hour and half before the 17 came home. It was a nice way to end the flying year, being the big fish in a small pond and being treated as well as we were. — **Don Burke**

MUSTANG ROUND-UP

July 17-18, 1999

Some of us can remember Mike Luther as a little boy, one of our most junior members. This year, as an enterprising young man of 19, he masterminded one of the best events ever to be held at Yankee Air Museum!

Mike envisioned a weekend of Mustangs: Ford cars and P-51 planes together with their drivers and pilots and all those interested in meeting and talking with three famous World War II pilots.

Our C-47 intercepted the Confederate Air Force arriving on Friday with their B-17 and He-111 and flew over Whitmore Lake for the photographs that appeared in local newspapers that weekend.

Saturday and Sunday, daytime flying thrilled the crowd. Our B-17 *Yankee Lady* was at an airshow in Jackson, but took a flex-ride opportunity to fly over the round-up. We waved!

Saturday evening's symposium featured a buffet dinner followed by a panel discussion with questions and answers. Featured guests were **Robert Morgan** of the B-17 *Memphis Belle,* **Bud Anderson** with the P-51 *Old Crow,* and German Ace **Gunther Rall**. As a backdrop, we had the setting sun, our Confederate Air Force friends' B-17 *Sentimental Journey* and their Heinkel, flanked by the P-51 *Lou IV* and Jack Roush's P-51 *Old Crow.*

A "Best Mustang" contest was judged by our three guest pilots and Jack Roush, and the winners drove away with a magnificent trophy seat-belted into the back seat of their red

1966 Mustang convertible.

We hope you were one of the almost 400 enthusiasts who enjoyed the evening symposium or that you had the chance to be here at some point over the great *Mustang Round-Up* weekend. We understand that Mike is already planning next year's event!

As you may have read in the October issue, Mike received a thank you letter from the Confederate Air Force saying they had been treated so well here, they were looking forward to visiting us again.

We are proud of you, Mike!

— Mary Ann Bittner

We get letters and e-mail ...

September 7, 1999

Gentlemen:

Enclosed is check #182 in the amount of $50.00 to be applied to your Building Fund. This gift is in honor of my brother-in-law's William R. Abbott, 80th birthday on September 23rd.

The museum is his "home away from home" and a fine example of dedicated volunteers.

Best wishes for the future.

Sincerely,
Doris Abbott

September 27, 1999

HH Staff:

First and foremost I am a founder member having joined before there were member numbers and when the Smiths (Greg & Cindy) were running their flight school and some of us got together to form the nucleus of YAF. I deeply resent the information and actions of a member as stated in last paragraph front page.

As a founder member I resent the fact that one of our members would make such a statement in the first place. I further resent the fact that he is still a member. We are supposed to love and help our fellow man regardless of race, origin or creed.

I further resent the "staff" not calling a "snake" a "snake." You guys should tell it like it is and not butter it over with comments about our Constitution and free speech. Our Constitution in no way guarantees its citizens the right to hurt people by what they say. Every so-called "right" in the Constitution carries along with it the responsibility to use that right responsibly and with concern about that what we do or say does not interfere with someone else's rights under the same Constitution. In all reality we do not have "rights" guranteed by the Constitution.

Contrary to what they are called by everyone, they are actually privileges not available anywhere else on earth.

Bob McLaughlin
Former National Membership
Chairperson and
Hangar Manager at YIP

On another subject, Mr. McLaughlin wrote to our President:

Just who is this AD HOC committee?

Who appointed them? Who gave them the right to speak for this founder member? They sure didn't run for that position. I did not have a chance to give my vote of approval or disapproval. No one asked this founder member if I wanted them to represent me. Did they get permission from National Board of Directors to send that letter??? Was YAF funding used for postage? There was no return address on the letter. The post–mark gave it away somewhat. What right does one division have to claim they represent everyone which their non-signature implies?

How do they know what was on founder members' minds when the organization was formed? None of them were around at that time. I didn't see any of them working on a cold Saturday in winter between Christmas and New Year's, with 6 inches of snow on the ground and no heat in the hangar tearing down the inner partition on the north doors.

They have absolutely no right to send me their drivel about B-17 flying club. It was generous National brothers and sisters who loaned YAF hard cash to contribute to our being able to purchase the B-17. I know of at least one couple who took out a second mortgage on their home just to be able to help YAF.

Without their generosity there

would be no B-17 to come to divisional fly-ins. We should be eternally grateful to these people instead of stabbing them in the back doing things outside the by-laws. Things like representing YAF to go with a trucker to get a donated aircraft and then taking it to a division instead of to National.

The most experienced pilots of "heavy" stuff are at National. That doesn't make it a "flying club." There are other locations where only 2 members can fly. Using it to go out to dinner at the Pines. "Publicity" Ha! Ha! Does that constitute a "flying club"? I sure as hell think so. The last I knew the hourly rate schedule they closely resembled 1941 rates.

Sounds to me like a case of the "tail" trying to wag the "dog". Any time a division is formed it has to agree with National by-laws. Break them enough times and you can expect reaction of some kind. We all are responsible for our own actions. Punch your father in the nose enough times, papa will finally come back at you. Do it enough times and he will kick you out on the street. It is that simple.

You have my permission to use this in whole or part in *HH.*

- Bob McLaughlin SL 0030 WR

COMMENTS FROM THE CREW CHIEF

In regard to the 80% of the available funds to fly two airplanes in the letter from the "Ad Hoc Membership Group of the YAF" —

The B-17 took in a gross of $543,396.54 during 1998 and 1999 flying seasons. Operating costs for the two years amounted to $179,061.72. That provided a net profit of $364,336.82 for the two years.

This is after the loss of 2 engines ($65,000.00), also, as I factor in $400.00 per operating hour for direct operating costs including engine change.

If any one of the Ad Hoc members need to verify this, stop into the maintenance office and see me. Liars may figure but figures don't lie and these figures are fact.

Norm Ellickson
YAF A/C Inspector
YAF Airshow Coordinator
B-17 Flight Engineer / Crew Chief

Let's Talk About Truth and Facts:

I welcome and invite any YAF member to stop by the Corporate Treasurer's office at any time to discuss any questions or concerns you may have pertaining to the Yankee Air Force, Inc. financial records. You are welcome to examine any date, any year, from September 1981 through the current 1999. If you would like to set a date and time, I will arrange to meet you in my office.

As with all important YAF records, aircraft titles, financial data, they are stored off-site in the bank safety deposit box! The YAF financial data is audited every year and all divisions are included in the non-profit IRS forms filed at the fiscal year end, which is through the calendar year December 31. In 1984 we had an "IRS" audit, because of a large donation we received. In 1994 we had a Certified Audit by an independent accounting firm from Southgate specializing in non-profit organizations. All our accounting is done under the management of a Certified Public Accountant from another YAF Division, who by occupation is an IRS auditor. Our accounting patterns/practices have been set up by official experts. This corporation balances to the penny! That is a fact.

"MORE FACTS" — This Corporate Treasurer is a Founding Member #133, and a "volunteer" just like every other YAF member. Over the last eighteen years I have been "Elected by the YAF Membership" (before the By-Laws were changed) to Treasurer, Secretary, Director, and Vice-President. At that point the Bookkeeper, I trained, then Treasurer (we lost to lung cancer) I "had to transfer" back to Corporate Treasurer, without finishing the Vice-President term; that is when Mr. Hanney stepped forward. I average 40 to 50 hours a week in just the finance area. We have 5 other volunteers, in addition to a Finance Committee, that work with me, and they are worth their weight in gold! Nina Smith, Linda Harrison, Jerry Hartweg, Mike Wisniewski and Tye Winkel. If you care about the YAF as much as we do and want the "Real Truth" come check out the "proof"— it is available for the asking — get the "Real Facts!"

Most sincerely,

Nancy Lockwood
Corporate Treasurer

LIONS and TIGERS and BEARS ? NO WAY !!!

It was definitely PANCAKES and SAUSAGE for 565 hungry people on Founders Day.

Thanks so much to everyone for a fine job. A thank you also goes out to all who helped all over the hangar. Seeing familiar faces and new faces all working together to make Founders Day a success.

One of the nicest things that happen to you when you help out is if you don't have friends here when you start, you will have friends when you leave. Did you hear about this guy, Larry Newhouse? He came for breakfast, started helping out, and was signed up as a new member before he left.

Special thanks to my partner Carol and the Guenther men, Clyde, Ken and Fred. Also to: Leslie Reynolds, Henry Paul, Don Messing, Larry Newhouse, Marian Foster, George Schweigert, Barb Dubler, Monty Ellickson, Steve Clark, Tony Krenzer, Ginny Mott, Betty Williams, Jerry Harmon, Lee Williams, Rita Baker, Nick Peth, Bill Colwell, Robert Manley, Russ Possey, Jerry Kurts, Henry Heuser, Keith Jones, and Charley Greenwald. If I missed anyone, I am sorry. See you around the hangar. I'll be looking for these faces and hopefully some more new and old familiar ones to be helping out in May for our Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast. My friends, thanks again.

— ***Renda***

I would like to dedicate this poem to the many fine men and women who dedicated many hours of their free time in the early years of the YAF so that the younger generation could get a real education about what all the beautiful aircraft at the YAF and other museums are all about and preserve them for their children to admire.

A Saturday Nite of Years Gone By

by Tom Webster
#00217 WR

Oh, I have tripped on mighty piles of junk
And moved desks through many, many rooms.
Upward I've climbed the stairs, with box and bags of stuff
And downward, too, with even other things.
Dirt I've swept, and trash I've dumped,
And done a hundred things you have not seen,
Mopped and washed and hauled and lugged
Into the murky darkness of distant corners.
Outward I've rushed into the Boiler House with countless loads of scrap
To cram and push and pile and try to find an empty inch to store some more.
And then with aching back, I think my job is done.
I've faced the dumpster one last time and found
A number of very loyal members taking everything out.

WELCOME
TO
the Y.A.F.

OUR NEW MEMBERS

- John Westendorf
- John Westendorf II (Jr Mbr)
- Tom Husband
- David E Frawley
- Milton Koenig
- Ronald S Caldwell
- George Regan
- Mary E Regan
- Chuck Hartsell
- James McGuire
- Ken Gilde , Jr.
- Linda Nugent
- Alan F Robinson
- Barbara A Robinson
- Gene Porter
- John A Warren
- James M Colvin
- Edward J Colvin
- Rolf Quisling
- Mooch Mrocca
- James Bolling
- John Bojanowski
- Tony Schad
- G Mark Allen
- Mark Mommsen
- Dave Mengel
- Simon Baseley
- Sharon Beaudette
- Tim Ianitell
- Jacquelin Bester
- Todd Bester
- Jack McManus
- Barry Shoults
- Rose Mary Reiz
- Kevin Howe
- Paul P Weaver
- Ed Talaga
- Stan Talaga
- Erich Schutz
- Brenden Boudreau
- Rob Smith

- Larry Lizarralde
- Michael Dinneen (Jr Mbr)
- Lee Plata
- Jeff Wildern
- Robert Miller
- James Miller
- Charles Miller
- Patrick Miller
- Don Fitzpatrick
- Edward Nairn
- Brian Carroll
- Craig Eichner
- George Witham
- Glen Witham
- John Bishop
- Paul Brothers
- Ed Carnathan
- Stephan Spence
- Brandon Parks
- William Sublette
- Stanley Shirley
- Danny Byrd
- Gerald Cherry
- Greg Wiseman
- Terry O'Flynn
- Robert Peloski
- Ted Scott
- Kenneth Luck
- Dave Herron
- Mike Coleman
- E A Petersen
- Jim Wasukanis
- Joe Wasukanis (Jr Mbr)
- Ronald Sortor
- Roger Hallingstad
- Mike Foster
- Joe Uetz
- Cari Mengel
- Bruce Pollock
- Al Siterlet (Life Member)
- Jeff Klain
- Lou Masch
- Gary "Doc" Masch
- Tad Alberts
- Bill Carpenter
- Victoria Munson
- Gino Casella
- Harry C McVey
- John B Prudhnicki
- Don Dick
- Larry Newhouse
- Jim Quinn
- Joe Cooper (Life Member)
- Robert C Wind
- Vincent Litchfield
- Michael Srosi
- Ben Rickman
- Michal Cabas
- Jim Dietrich
- Joe Leugers
- Don Kwiatkowski
- Mike Hirsch
- Gail W Burrier
- Bill Wallo
- Tim Smith
- Jolyn Johnson Stockwell
- Gerald R Horn
- Eric Watkins
- Donald G Searer
- Sheila Mansfield
- Tony Livick
- John R Parsio
- John R Parsio Jr.
- Donald Oney
- Bill Smith
- Bradford Mandell
- Renae Coleman-Mandell
- L J Baviera Jr
- Bryan Greer
- Dwight Brandt
- Robert Harper
- Chris Deskins
- Eric Marshall
- Dan Marshall
- Joe Foley
- David Burghard
- Robert F Harter
- Doug Slocum
- Bill Thompson
- Marc Hollander
- Bill Fitch
- Eric Steensland
- David Knisley
- Derek Redding
- Al Chorpenning
- Kris Nienkirchen
- Karl Nienkirchen
- Red Nienkirchen
- Kurt Nienkirchen
- Patricia Klick
- Kevin Smith

The Last Word????

By Capt. Crabby-

First thing is that one of our favorite ladies, Connie Kosek (Connie's Corner) has submitted her first column by electronic means. Her daughter was kind enough to send us an e-mail with the column attached. This makes the life of our resident typist Mary Ann "Flying fingers" Bittner much easier. Thanks dear ladies it all helps.

On another subject– we forgot in our last issue to give all the information about the *International B-24 60th Anniversary* gathering in San Diego CA, December 9-12. YAF member "Bud" Chamberlin would like everyone to know that the cost of the full celebration less hotel is $125.00 and for the keynote banquet only is $40.00. Reservations can be arranged by sending a check payable to "B-24 Groups Memorial - San Diego" to Col. Richard Baynes, 71 Nighthawk, Irvine CA 92604-3683.

The last thing is about the orders for the items presented in last months issue. Please keep the orders coming, so far we are doing quite well, but the people in the gift shop wanted us to let you know that they are not able to take phone orders. The people on the tour desk and at the gift shop have more than enough to handle now, so please don't ask to have someone take an order. You may not get what you would like.

A safe and happy Holiday Season
From all the staff of
Hangar Happenin's

Don't forget your gifts from the catalog!

- Denim shirts
- Sweatshirts
- Golf shirts
- Caps
- Calendars

Delivered right to your door for the Holidays, show your pride and help the *Yankee Air Force.*

(Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery)

Another great gift idea - A "Flight Experience" on the world famous *Yankee Lady* B-17- G a true gift of a lifetime. Contact the Museum for details.

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